

The BLACK BOX

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Author of "The Mole of Fingers," "The Prince of Sinners," "Anna, the Adventurer," etc.

Novelized from the motion picture drama of the same name produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company. Illustrated with photographs from the motion picture production.

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SYNOPSIS.

Sanford Quest, master criminologist of the world, finds that in bringing to justice Macdonough, the murderer of Lord Ashleigh's daughter, he has just entered a life-and-death contest with a mysterious master criminal. Engineered by Professor Ashleigh, Lord Ashleigh's brother, to recover the stolen skeleton of an anthropoid ape, hurried to Mrs. Rheinholdt's reception, where her diamonds have been torn from her throat by a pair of hands without arms or body, a black box later appears from nowhere in his room and a note contained in it, signed by the armless hands, suggests that the diamonds may be hidden together. While Laura, Quest's secretary, shadows Craig the professor's valet, Quest and Lenora, his assistant, find the skeleton in a but in the professor's garden, and discover there an inhuman creature, half monkey and half man. As the professor explains the but is set free and the monkey man, and skeleton are destroyed in the flames. In Quest's room the Rheinholdt diamonds suddenly reappear, enclosed in a second black box with a note signed by the threatening hands.

FOURTH INSTALLMENT

AN OLD GRUDGE.

CHAPTER X.

Sanford Quest was smoking his after-breakfast cigar with a relish somewhat affected by the measure of his perplexities. Early though it was, Lenora was already in her place, bending over her desk, and Laura, who had just arrived, was busy directing herself of her coat and hat. Quest watched the latter impatiently.

"Well," he asked.

Laura came forward, straightening her hair with her hands.

"No go," she answered. "I spent the evening in the club and I talked with two men who knew Craig, but I couldn't get on to anything. From all I could hear of the man, respectability is his middle name."

"That's the professor's own idea," Quest remarked grimly.

"We're fairly up against it, boss," Laura sighed. "The best thing we can do is to get on to another job. The Rheinholdt woman has got her jewels back, or will have at noon today. I bet she won't worry about the thief. Then the professor's moldy old skeleton was returned to him, even if it was burned up afterwards. I should take on something fresh."

"Can't be done," Quest replied shortly. "Look here, girls, your average intellects are often apt to hit upon the truth when a man who sees too far ahead goes wrong. Rule Craig out. Any other possible person occur to you? Speak out, Lenora. You've something on your mind, I can see."

"I'm afraid you'll laugh at me," she began tentatively.

"Won't hurt you if I do," Quest replied.

"I can't help thinking of Macdonough," Lenora continued falteringly. "He has never been recaptured. I don't know whether he's dead or alive. He had a perfect passion for jewels. If he is alive, he would be desperate and would attempt anything."

Quest smoked in silence for a moment.

"I guess the return of the jewels squelched the Macdonough theory," he remarked. "He wouldn't be likely to part with the stuff when he'd once got his hands on it. However, I always meant, when we had a moment's spare time, to look into that fellow's whereabouts. We'll take it on straight away. Can't do any harm."

"I know the section boss on the railway at the spot where he disappeared," Laura announced.

"Then just take the train down to Mountview—that's the nearest spot—and get busy with him," Quest directed.

"Try and persuade him to loan us the gang's hauler to go down the line. Lenora and I will come on in the automobile."

"Take you longer," Lenora remarked as she moved off to put on her jacket. "The cars do it in a quarter of an hour."

"Can't help that," Quest replied. "Mrs. Rheinholdt's coming here to identify her jewels at twelve o'clock, and I can't run any risk of there being no train back. You'd better be making good with the section boss. Take plenty of hills with you."

"Sure! That's easy enough," Laura promised him. "I'll be waiting for you."

She hurried off and Quest commenced his own preparations. From his safe he took one of the small black lumps of explosive to which he had once before owed his life, and fitted it carefully in a small case with a coil of wire and an electric lighter. He looked at his revolver and recharged it. Finally he rang the bell for his confidential valet.

"Ross," he asked, "who else is there here today besides you?"

"No one today, sir."

"Just as well, perhaps," Quest observed. "Listen, Ross, I am going out now for an hour or two, but I shall be back at midday. Remember that Mrs. Rheinholdt and Inspector French are to be here at twelve o'clock. If by any chance I should be a few minutes late, ask them to wait. And, Ross, a young woman from the Salvation

the spot where he had left the car. The chauffeur, who saw him coming, started up and climbed to his seat. Quest took his place.

"Drive to the office," he ordered. The man slipped in his clutch. They were in the act of gliding off when there was a tremendous report. They stopped short. The man jumped down and looked at the back tire.

"Blowout," he remarked laconically. Quest frowned.

"How long will it take?"

"Four minutes," the man replied. "I've got another wheel ready. That's the queerest blowout I ever saw, though."

The two men leaned over the tire. Suddenly Quest's expression changed. His hand stole into his hip pocket.

"Tom," he explained, "that wasn't a blowout at all. Look here!"

He pointed to the small level hole. Almost at once he stood back and the sunbeam flashed upon the revolver clutched in his right hand.

"That was a bullet," he continued. "Someone fired at that tire. Tom, there's trouble about."

The man looked nervously around. "That's a rifle bullet, sure," he muttered.

"Get on the wheel as quick as you can," Quest directed. "Here, I'll give you a hand."

He stooped down to unfasten the straps which fastened the spare wheel. It was one of his rare lapses, realized a moment too late. Almost in his ears came the hoarse cry:

"Hands up, gunner! Hands up this second or I'll blow you to hell!"

Quest glanced over his shoulder and looked into the face of Red Gallagher, raised a little above the level of the road. A very ugly little revolver was pointed directly at Quest's heart.

"My mate's got you covered on the other side of the road, too. Hands up, both of you, or we'll make a quick job of it."

Quest shrugged his shoulders, threw his revolver into the road and obeyed. As he did so, the other man stole out from behind a bush and sprang for the chauffeur, who under cover of the car was stealing off. There was a brief struggle, then the dull thud of the railway man's rifle falling on the chauffeur's head. He rolled over and lay in the road.

"Pitch him off amongst the bushes," Red Gallagher ordered. "You don't want anyone who comes by to see. Now lend me a hand with this chap."

"What do you propose to do with me?" Quest asked.

"You'll know soon enough," Red Gallagher answered. "A matter of five minutes' talk to start with. You see that handkerchief?"

"Perfectly well," Quest assented. "My eyesight is quite normal."

"Get there then. I'm a yard behind you and my revolver's pointing for the middle of your back."

Quest sprang lightly down from the road, crossed the few intervening yards and stepped into the handkerchief house.

Gallagher and his mate followed close behind. Quest paused on the threshold.

"It's a filthy dirty hole," he remarked. "Can't we have our little chat out here? Is it money you want?"

Gallagher glanced around. Then with an ugly push of the shoulder he sent Quest reeling into the shed. His great form blocked up the doorway.

"No," he cried fiercely. "It's not money I want this time. Quest, you brute, you dirty bloodhound! You sent me to the pen for five years—you

"I believe I was in the case," Quest observed carelessly.

"That's so! Now then, young ladies," Mr. Moran advised, "hold tight, and here goes!"

They ambled down the line for about half a mile. Then Moran brought them to standstill.

"This is the spot," he declared. "Now, if you want my impressions you are welcome to them. All the search has been made on the right-hand side here and in New York. I've had my eye on that hill for a long time. My impression is that he hid there."

"I'll take your advice," Quest decided. "We'll spread out and take a little exercise in hill climbing."

"Good luck to you!" the boss exclaimed.

They searched carefully and deliberately for more than half an hour. Then Laura suddenly called out. They looked around to find only her head visible. She scrambled up, muddy and with wet leaves clinging to her skirt.

"Say, that guy of a section boss told me to look out for caves. I've been in one, sure enough! Only just saved myself."

They hurried to where she was. Quest peered into the declivity down which she had slipped. Suddenly he gave vent to a little exclamation. At the same time Laura called out. An inch or two of tunnel was clearly visible through the straw leaves. Quest, flat on his stomach, crawled a little way down, took out his electric torch from his pocket and brushed the torch away. Then he clambered to his feet.

"Our search is over," he declared gravely. "And your troubles, Lenora. That is Macdonough's body."

Lenora's face sank into her hands for a moment. Quest stood on one side while Laura passed her arm around the other girl's waist.

Quest glanced at his watch. "I'll have to get," he said, "but I'll send someone along. Cheer up, Lenora," he added kindly. "Look after her, Laura."

Quest hastened along the road to

circle save some hundreds of days in an hour. Sentiment would demand that the pole itself be tangibly represented, with a suitable inscription on it to Commander Peary and (more doubtfully) to Captain Cook; and popular afternoon excursions might well be organized to the magnetic pole, a little distance away, to watch the compass stand on its head. Certainly, the exploiting of this unique possession could not be in better hands. All nations will envy the courage, ingenuity and endurance that gave the Stars



"You Don't—You Don't Suspect Me of This?"

of black substance inside, closed it up, placed it against the far wall, untwisted the coil, stood back near the door and then pressed the button. The result was extraordinary. The whole of the far wall was blown out and for some distance in front the ground was furrowed up by the explosion. Quest replaced the instrument in his pocket, sprang through the opening and ran for the tower house. Behind him on his way to New York he could see a freight train coming along. He could hear, too, Red Gallagher's roar of anger. It was less than fifty yards, yet as soon as he reached the shelter of the tower the thunder of the freight sounded in Quest's ears. He glanced around. Red Gallagher and his mate were racing almost side by side towards him. He rushed up the narrow stairs into the signal room, tearing open his coat to show his official badge.

"Stop the freight," he shouted to the operator. "Quick, I'm Sanford Quest, detective—special powers from the chief commissioner."

The man moved to the signal. Another voice thundered in his ears. He turned swiftly around. The Irishman's red head had appeared at the top of the staircase.

"Drop that signal or I'll blow you into bits," he shouted.

The operator hesitated, dazed. "Walk towards me," Gallagher shouted. "Look here, you say, this will show you whether I'm in earnest or not!"

A bullet passed within a few inches of the operator's head. He came slowly across the room. Below they could hear the roar of the freight.

"This ain't your job," the Irishman continued savagely. "We want the cop, and we're going to have him."

Quest had stolen a yard or two nearer during this brief colloquy. Gallagher's mate from behind shouted out a warning just a second too late. With a sudden kick, Quest sent the revolver flying across the room and before the Irishman could recover he struck him full in the face. Notwithstanding his huge size and strength, Gallagher reeled. The operator who had just begun to realize what was happening flung himself bodily against the two thugs. A shot from the tangled mass of struggling limbs whistled past Quest's head as he sprang to the window which overlooked the track. The freight had already almost passed. Quest steadied himself for a supreme effort, crawled out on the little steel bridge and poised himself for a moment. The last car was just beneath. The gap between it and the previous one was slipping by. He set his teeth and jumped on the smooth top.

Back behind the tower Red Gallagher and his mate bent with horrified faces over the body of the signalman.

"What the hell did you want to plug him for?" the latter muttered. "He ain't in the show at all. You've done us, Red, he's cocked!"

Red Gallagher staggered to his feet. Already the horror of the murder was in his face as he glanced furtively around.

"I never meant to drop him," he muttered. "I got mad at seeing Quest get off. That man's a devil."

"What are we going to do?" the other demanded hoarsely.

"There's the auto," Gallagher shouted. "Come on, old man! I can fix the wheel. If we've got to swing for this job, we'll have something of our own back first."

They crawled to the side of the road. Gallagher's rough, hairy fingers were still trembling, but they knew their job. In a few minutes the wheel was fixed. Clumsily but successfully, the great Irishman turned the car around away from the city.

"She's a hummer," he muttered. "I'll make her go when we get the hang of it. Sit tight."

They drove clumsily off, gathering speed at every yard. Behind, in the shadow of the tower, the signalman lay dead. Quest, half way to New York, stretched flat on his stomach, was struggling for life with knees and hands and feet.

CHAPTER XI.

Mrs. Rheinholdt welcomed the inspector with a beaming smile as he stepped out of his office and approached her automobile.

"How nice of you to be so punctual, Mr. French," she exclaimed, making room for him by her side. "Will you tell the man to drive to Mr. Quest's house in Georgia square?"

The inspector obeyed and took his place in the luxurious limousine.

"How beautifully punctual we are!" she continued, glancing at the clock.

ing, not America, but the old Orient of India and China and their gold and spices. The heart of men had always yearned unto the East and its riches. There was nothing new in the object of Columbus' search. All that was new was the direction. Columbus went West. Judged in terms of its original purpose, his voyage was a total failure. He started straight for Asia, but ran upon the long, broad diko of land we now call the Americas. It has cost more than four centuries for him and those who swarmed

after him to traverse and conquer the hindering diko which rose in his path and forbade him Asia. The opening of the canal is the first cutting of the diko, the avenging of Columbus, the end of the four-century halt, the resumption of the advance toward the Orient.—H. I. Wheeler in Review of Reviews.

Jobs.

There may be a few easy jobs in the world, but it requires hard work to get them.—Tolodo Blade.

To Produce Fertile Eggs.

Dry mash containing ten per cent meat scraps should be fed to breeding stock, as it will produce strong fertile eggs, and plenty of them.

Managing Breeding Swine.

In the management of breeding swine, the health of the animal is the important point.

Cover to Hold Snow.

Cover the strawberry bed with about four inches of straw to hold the snow.

PUBLIC HIGHWAYS

WIDE ROADS ARE IMPORTANT

Time That Highway Builders Awakened to New Conditions—Involves Safety and Convenience.

The road builders of today are neglecting a very important point. The motor car is a new thing in the world and creates entirely new conditions.

The travel of the future will be very great.

The fashion should be set at once for a 100-foot right of way on all main roads.

One half should be developed first; the other could be used by the former owners under a free lease from the counties until it is needed. It will surely be needed some day.

Allowing ten feet for a sidewalk the first hard-surfaced road should center



Making a Road in South.

on the remaining 40 feet. The model to be worked to is two 40-foot roadways, two ten-foot sidewalks and three rows of shade trees—a most proper plan for a hot climate.

All travel of course takes the right hand road. The grade should allow crossing from one road to the other.

On a single road with a 50-foot right of way, two ten-foot sidewalks and 30 feet for vehicles, when autos are standing at each curb there is not room for safe passing of vehicles going in opposite directions and this difficulty and danger increases with the traffic.

A single-track road should be 60 feet wide.

The middle line of new roads is generally on a section line or other line between two owners. If the fashion is set for a 100-foot right of way owners will give the 50 feet.

If county commissioners will insist on the 100 feet and make it a state-wide rule supported by public opinion, owners will fall into line and give the land.

The double-road plan allows speed with safety and the speed of motor cars will in the future be increased on long runs.

The point is that it is the duty of the pioneer road builders of today to provide for the travel of the future.

Fifteen years ago in Chicago a street a mile long between Grant and Lincoln parks was widened from 60 to 200 feet. It cost \$10,000,000.

If the people who laid out that street could have looked ahead the expense would have been only the amount of the surveyor's bill. In less degree such things will happen some day in Florida wherever narrow roads are built.

California has awakened to the idea and has some main roads 100 feet wide.

As soon as Florida gets hard roads the travel by tourists and citizens by motor car and motor truck will rapidly increase and will grow in time to enormous proportions.

The climate and the motor car will accomplish it and it is time that the road builders awakened to these entirely new conditions. Besides the question of safety and convenience there is the question of beauty, of civic pride and the satisfaction of building right for all time.

Road builders must realize that the motor car has brought entirely new conditions.

They must lay out the roads wide enough for all time, while the land can be got for nothing. It is a duty.

Kindness to Cow Pays.

Be kind to the dairy cow. You can't pound milk out of her with the milk stool or run milk out of her with the dog when bringing her from the pasture to the barn. Get on good terms with the dairy cow, and her friendship will be seen by increased profits in the milk pail.

Surfacing Footpaths.

For surfacing footpaths, gravel, mixture of sand and clay, and cinders will, in general, give good satisfaction.

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THE POLE AS A POSSESSION

Typically English Is "Humorous" Comment Made by the Manchester Guardian.

As the North pole cannot fairly be classed as a "place in the sun," no international trouble is likely to come of the reported intention of the United States to "annex it." A few scores of penguins, a polar bear or two, a deal of ice and some first-rate blizzards will have an owner for the first time;

but even the United States cannot be expected to make much of her new possessions in the meantime. Given better communication, however, it should provide a rich field of inspirations for the American company promoter. Conceivably, for instance, the fascination of a stroll in the courtyard of the Pole hotel, in which the termination of the degrees of longitude would, of course, be carefully marked, so that one could move from 19° N. to 90° N. in a step or two, and by walking briskly round an eastward

circle save some hundreds of days in an hour. Sentiment would demand that the pole itself be tangibly represented, with a suitable inscription on it to Commander Peary and (more doubtfully) to Captain Cook; and popular afternoon excursions might well be organized to the magnetic pole, a little distance away, to watch the compass stand on its head. Certainly, the exploiting of this unique possession could not be in better hands. All nations will envy the courage, ingenuity and endurance that gave the Stars

The Avenging of Columbus.

The cutting of the Panama canal is the avenging of Columbus. When he started across the seas he was seek-

ing, not America, but the old Orient of India and China and their gold and spices. The heart of men had always yearned unto the East and its riches. There was nothing new in the object of Columbus' search. All that was new was the direction. Columbus went West. Judged in terms of its original purpose, his voyage was a total failure. He started straight for Asia, but ran upon the long, broad diko of land we now call the Americas. It has cost more than four centuries for him and those who swarmed

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